



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**November 13, 2008
For immediate release**

1. Drawdown begins at Lake Darling

DRAWDOWN BEGINS AT LAKE DARLING

MEDIA CONTACT: Rachel Erb at (319) 694-2430 or rachel.erb@dnr.iowa.gov

BRIGHTON- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), along with Lambourne Environmental Diving Service, began the drawdown of Lake Darling Monday, which commenced the first step in Darling's in-lake and spillway restoration.

The Lake Darling spillway has been damaged by leaking water. The leaking of the spillway has resulted in a loss of over three million gallons of water per day.

Recently, a meeting was held to plan and discuss the restoration of the spillway. It was decided that the existing spillway will be completely removed and replaced with a pipe spillway and auxiliary vegetated spillways around the ends of the dam. Also, to improve water quality and to increase the volume of the lake, the lake level will be raised two feet.

On Monday, the restoration process began with the initial drawdown of the lake.

The DNR's first objective in the drawdown process was to remove the front-slide gate of the dam with the help of Lambourne Diving Service.

"The slide gate weighs approximately 500 pounds so [DNR officials] provided a boat equipped with a winch to assist the diver in lifting the gate," DNR Fisheries Biologist Chad Dolan said.

After the gate was lifted and securely fastened in the open position, the diver and DNR officials proceeded to the gear box to turn the wheel that opens the gate valve.

“As the gate valve began to open, water began to rush from the drain tube. Under tremendous water pressure, the wheel that opened the gate valve became very difficult to maneuver,” Dolan said. “Using pipe wrenches for leverage placed along the shaft that runs to the gate-valve gear box and recruiting three individuals to turn the wheel itself, we were able to fully open the gate valve.”

Dolan estimates that when the valve was first opened, water discharged from the drain tube to the discharge pool at a rate of 1,000 gallons per second. In a matter of about 30 minutes, the lake dropped approximately two to three inches.

As of Wednesday, two days after the initial drawdown, the lake had dropped about three feet. The rain the past few days has slowed drain time but given there is no large rainfall in the next couple of weeks, the lake should be empty around Nov. 24.

With the lake drained, in-lake restoration and spillway construction will commence in late spring of 2009 with a tentative completion late summer of 2010.

The complete in-lake and spillway restoration project includes improving Darling’s water quality, fishing and dam structure. For more information regarding the Lake Darling Restoration Project, please visit www.friendsoflakedarling.com/ldrhomepage.html.

Writer: Rachel Erb